

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the continued thorough examination of the present application that is reflected in the Official Action of August 4, 2006. In order to expedite allowance of the present application, Applicants are placing objected to Claims 4, 6, 7, 12 and 21-23 in independent form, and amending or canceling the remaining claims to place the application in condition for allowance. These amendments are being made to place the application in condition for allowance, and shall not be construed as acquiescence to the rejections under 35 USC §§101, 102(e) or 103(a). Moreover, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original claims and/or the claims from Applicants' earlier Amendment of May 22, 2006, in one or more continuing applications.

Specifically, objected to Claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form by incorporating the recitations thereof into independent Claim 1, and canceling Claim 4. Moreover, dependent Claim 6 has been amended to depend from Claim 1, so that dependent Claims 2, 3 and 6-9 are also in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claim 12 has been rewritten in independent form by incorporating the recitations thereof into independent Claim 10, and by canceling Claim 12. Dependent Claims 11 and 13 are also in condition for allowance, as depending from allowable Claim 10.

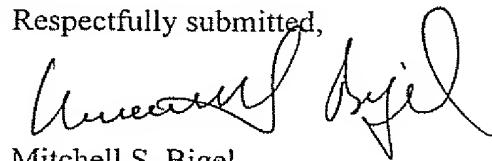
Objected to dependent Claims 21 and 22 have been amended to depend from allowable Claims 1 and 10, respectively, so that these claims are also in condition for allowance.

Finally, allowable Claim 23 has been rewritten in independent form by incorporating the recitations thereof, and of intermediate Claim 16, into independent Claim 14. Claims 23 and 16 have been canceled. Dependent Claim 15 already depends from Claim 14 and is, therefore, in condition for allowance. Dependent Claims 17 and 18 have been amended to depend from independent Claim 14, and to provide proper antecedent basis, so that they also are in condition for allowance. Claims 19, 20 and 24 have been canceled.

In re: Kaminsky et al.
Serial No.: 10/601,035
Filed: June 20, 2003
Page 8 of 8

In view of the above, all of the present claims are now in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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